

48 COMMENTARY ON MACAULAY'S
HISTORY

bably had often seen him,—like Atlas
conscious that a
world was on his shoulders. But the airs
which he gave
himself only heightened the respect and
admiration which
he inspired. His demeanour was regarded as
a model.
Scotchmen who wished to be thought wise
looked as like
Paterson as they could.¹

Examples might be multiplied but these
will suffice.
The men pictured by Macaulay are not the
grey shadows
which figure in the pages of most historians,
and therefore
he succeeded in attracting readers whom
they failed to
interest.

The surroundings in which the events
Macaulay nar-
rated took place are described with equal
vividness. He
spared himself no labour in order to realise
them, and he
spares his readers no detail in order to make
them see the
scenes too. His first step, naturally, was to
study the sites
of battles or campaigns. Take as an example
Sir George
Trevelyan's account of the visit which
Macaulay paid to
Ireland in the summer of 1849.

The notes made during his fortnight's tour
through the
scenes of the Irish war are equal in bulk to a
first-class
article in the Edinburgh or Quarterly
Reviews. He gives
four closely-written folio pages to the Boyne,
and six to
Londonderry. It is interesting to compare
the shape
which each idea took as it arose in his mind
with the shape
in which he eventually gave it to the world.
As he drove

up the river from Drogheda he notices that ' the country
looked like a flourishing part of England. Cornfields,
gardens, woods, succeeded each other just as in Kent and
Warwickshire/ And again : ' Handsome seats, fields of
wheat and clover, noble trees :—it would be called a fine
country even in Somersetshire/ In the sixteenth chapter of
the History these hasty jottings have been transmuted into
the sentences : ' Beneath lay a valley now so rich and so

¹ VI, 2910 (xxiv).